

NOTES ON SOME RARE BIRDS IN THE COLLEC-
TION OF THE LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL
SOCIETY.

BY WILLIAM DUTCHER.

THE Long Island Historical Society was organized at a meeting held March 3, 1863, in the rooms of the Hamilton Literary Association, by a few persons interested in local history and kindred subjects, and in the following month it was formally incorporated under its present name. Rooms were then obtained in a building located at the corner of Court and Joralomen Streets, Brooklyn, owned by the late Mr. A. A. Low. Such material as was added to the collection from time to time was exhibited there until the summer of 1880, when the Society moved to its present commodious and fire-proof building at the corner of Pierrepont and Clinton Streets. Shortly after the organization of the Society a department of natural history was instituted, and has been a valuable adjunct to the more general purposes of the institution. A small and unostentatious beginning has become the nucleus of an excellent and instructive collection of the zoölogy of Long Island, and has grown to embrace much of value of its ethnology, local antiquities, and historical relics. The work of the Society is defined in Article II of its by-laws as follows: "The object of the Society is to discover, procure, and preserve whatever may relate to general history, especially the natural, civil, literary, and ecclesiastical history of the United States, the State of New York, and *more particularly* of the counties, towns, and villages of Long Island." Later a committee consisting of Mr. Elias Lewis, Jr., Mr. J. Carson Brevoort, Mr. Henry E. Pierrepont, Prof. Chas. E. West, and Mr. Charles Congdon, was formed, whose special duties were defined as follows: "To collect, procure, and preserve whatever might illustrate the natural history of Long Island." This latter department now contains three hundred and twenty-nine well-mounted specimens and three hundred and eleven unmounted skins of Long Island birds, representing some two hundred and ninety-six species. Its collection of eggs

contains about one thousand specimens, representing one hundred and fifty-three species. The larger part of the collection represents the avifauna of Long Island although a few extra-limital species are included. The great educational and historical value of this well-housed collection shows very forcibly the good results that can be obtained by the unselfish and determined efforts of public-spirited citizens, who give not only of their time, but of their means, to build an institution that adds largely to the intellectual growth, the patriotism, and love of good citizenship of the neighborhood. The greater the number of such institutions that we have formed throughout our land the greater the benefits that we of the present generation shall bestow on those who may take up our unfinished work.

All of the specimens in the bird collection were presented to the Society by a few donors, the larger part coming from Col. Nicolas Pike, long a resident of Kings County, and always an ardent and successful sportsman, and withal an accurate and scientific field naturalist. Early in the thirties he commenced to make a collection of the birds of Long Island, which he continued for many years and finally presented to the Historical Society. In the annotations of the species, which will follow, many very interesting items of Long Island bird history will be given from his note-books.

Coincident with the early work of Col. Pike, Mr. John Akhurst established himself as a taxidermist in Brooklyn where he has followed his profession for over half a century. Nearly all the specimens in this collection were mounted by Mr. Akhurst, who beside his skill in taxidermy is also an excellent field naturalist. During a recent visit to him, Mr. Akhurst, while in a reminiscent mood, related to me many interesting incidents relative to the early history of this collection. He said for many years Col. Pike and himself collected birds and other zoölogical specimens in Kings County which was then largely wooded or occupied as farmland where now it is covered with streets and blocks of dwellings. Fulton Market in New York City was, as it is now, the depot for the sale of produce from Long Island, and the dealers there received from the professional gunners on Long Island a large number of game birds and many rare birds. There was a great rivalry between Mr. Akhurst and

the late John G. Bell of New York as to who would get the rarities, and many an early morning visit was made to the market by each in hopes that he would be the first to find and secure some new and strange specimen. Another channel through which many birds came to Mr. Akhurst was by a travelling marketman known as 'Old Jake' who twice per week travelled with a horse and wagon from Babylon to Brooklyn, a distance of forty miles, and brought to the city, for sale, game, poultry, eggs, and other country produce. Knowing that he could always find a market for rare or uncommon birds with Mr. Akhurst, he brought to him all he secured during his semi-weekly trips along the South Shore. Local gunners, of whom there were many in Brooklyn, brought to Mr. Akhurst rarities for identification, sale, or mounting. While it is difficult at this late date to establish full data for each specimen in the collection, yet, from the notebooks of Col. Pike and Mr. Akhurst's knowledge of the specimens, can be established the fact that all those annotated hereafter are from Long Island, and in many cases the exact locality and date of capture can be given. A few specimens have been contributed by other individuals whose names will appear in connection with the species. In this connection it is but just to state that the addition of a branch of natural history to the objects of the Historical Society originated entirely with Mr. Elias Lewis, Jr., and it is due to his untiring and devoted labor that this collection has attained its present size. Since its foundation he has been the honorary curator of the collection, and it is due to his care that it has been preserved in its present excellent condition. There are many gaps yet to be filled in the collection before it will be a complete representation of the avifauna of Long Island. These gaps can be filled with little difficulty, provided the necessary means are furnished the curator. It is to be hoped that civic pride will lead some individual in Brooklyn to complete the work that has been so admirably commenced by Mr. Lewis. The arrangement and nomenclature of the collection follows Mr. George N. Lawrence's list, published in 1866, but it will be re-arranged and re-labelled according to the order and nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-List (1886 ed.) by the writer before the close of the present year. In the following annotations no mention of the commoner species will be made,

only of those that can be considered rare, or otherwise important or interesting.

Sula sula. BOOBY.—This specimen is in immature plumage and was mounted by Mr. Akhurst from a bird in the flesh. It is labelled: "Shot on Moriches Bay," and was presented by Mr. H. G. Reeve.

Pelecanus erythrorhynchos. AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN.—This specimen bears on its label the words "Canarsie Bay, presented by J. C. Brevoort." It was mounted by Mr. Akhurst who purchased the bird in the flesh with funds provided by Mr. Brevoort. No date is given.

Anas strepera. GADWALL.—Presented by Col. Pike, who says: "Killed in a fresh water pond near Speonk, Long Island, 1841. Formerly common."

Aythya collaris. RING-NECKED DUCK.—There are two specimens, male, in full breeding plumage, labelled "From south side of Long Island." Mr. Akhurst mounted both, and states that they were purchased in Fulton Market, New York City, of Messrs. A. & E. Robbins who said they came from the south side of Long Island. No date is given.

Glaucionetta islandica. BARROW'S GOLDEN-EYE.—This specimen was presented by Mr. Akhurst who states that it was purchased in the flesh from 'Old Jake,' who procured it from one of the gunners on the south side of Long Island. There is no date attached to the specimen, nor any locality except as above stated. This is the only specimen of this species ever procured by Mr. Akhurst.

Histrionicus histrionicus. HARLEQUIN DUCK.—One specimen in the collection, recorded in Auk, Vol. VI, p. 67, by George B. Badger.

Camptolaimus labradorius. LABRADOR DUCK.—The writer has already recorded full data regarding the specimen of the Labrador Duck in this collection. In this connection some statements by Mr. Akhurst relative to the former abundance of this now extinct Duck are of interest. During the period between 1843 and 1850 he made up a number of specimens and shipped them to England and Germany. A near neighbor of his was captain of a packet ship running between New York and England, and carried many specimens of American water fowl to collectors in England, among them at least twenty Labrador Ducks. Mr. Akhurst has no means of knowing to whom these birds were sent as they were purchased by the captain on orders. He filled a similar number of orders for Labrador Ducks for collectors in Germany, which were sent by a captain sailing from New York to some of the German ports. It is fair to assume even at this late day that some of these specimens must still be extant in Europe, presumably in private collections.

Chen caerulescens. BLUE GOOSE.—This specimen was presented by Col. Pike who killed it on Shinnecock Bay opposite Ponquogue, while in a blind at a place known as the 'Hole-in-the-Wall.' "There were two individuals; one I killed, and the other fell at some distance from me and I did not search for it. I consider it a very rare bird on Long Island."

Anser albifrons gambeli. AMERICAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE.—There are two specimens in the collection, one labelled "Presented by H. G. Reeve, shot on Montauk," and the other "Presented by Col. Nicolas Pike." Col. Pike says of this species: "It is very rare, and I consider it the finest game bird I have ever eaten, much superior to the Canvas-back Duck or a young Canada Goose. I have met with it but three times in my life. The first one I killed from a blind in Great South Bay in November, 1846. This is the specimen in the collection. I find in my notes that a second one was killed from a battery off Islip in 1849, March 18th. What became of this bird I do not know, unless I let Philip Brasher have it. The third and last specimen was killed by me from a shore blind where I was lying for Ducks. This was March 2, 1872. It was badly mutilated, for I killed it when close to me. It was picked and eaten and pronounced a delicious morsel."

Branta nigricans. BLACK BRANT.—There is an exceptionally fine specimen of this species in the collection, which was shot by Col. Pike in Great South Bay, off Islip, Long Island, in 1840. He tells me: "I had the skin some years before Mr. Lawrence described the Black Brant as a new species.¹ The late Professor Baird saw it while on a visit to my house and remarked that it was an interesting specimen; this was in 1844 when I resided in Henry Street, Brooklyn. Some years after, but subsequent to the date Mr. Lawrence separated the Black Brant, he saw my specimen and gave me its correct name. Prior to that time I had considered it only an exceptional Brant."

Plegadis autumnalis. GLOSSY IBIS.—Col. Pike presented this specimen, and states as follows: "I have killed this species twice on Long Island, one at Southampton on September 12, 1847, and one at Canarsie Bay on October 10, 1848. Mr. Akhurst purchased still another specimen in Fulton Market that was shot on Long Island. It was purchased by Col. Pike who presented it to Count Tipani, who took it to Italy."

Ardea cœrulea. LITTLE BLUE HERON.—Both are in the dark phase of plumage and are labelled "South Bay." Col. Pike's notes are as follows: "These birds were killed by me on the meadows of the Great South Bay on August 17, 1847. They were at that time frequently met with. In 1888 I passed three weeks shooting at Ponquogue, Long Island, and was surprised not to meet with them."

Rallus crepitans. CLAPPER RAIL.—There is a fine specimen of this common Long Island bird in albinistic plumage. There are no data with it.

¹ 1846. Lawrence, George N. — Description of a new species of *Anser*. By George N. Lawrence. Read March 16, 1846. Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. New York, Vol. IV, 1847, pp. 171, 172, plate xii, of *Anser nigricans*. Issued in Nos. 6, 7, August, 1846. 1. *Anser nigricans*, n. s., Egg Harbor, N. J., pages 171, 172.

Porzana noveboracensis. YELLOW RAIL.—Two specimens which Col. Pike killed on the meadows near Southampton, Long Island, in 1848. He says of the species: "Formerly often met with, now very scarce. Ten years ago while shooting over the same ground I did not meet with a single individual."

Ionornis martinica. PURPLE GALLINULE.—"Formerly very plentiful; slowly passing away. I have not seen one of these birds for many years on Long Island. The specimen in the Long Island Historical Society's collection was shot by me at Indian Pond,¹ Long Island."—(*Nicolas Pike*, MS. notes.)

Recurvirostra americana. AMERICAN AVOCET.—Says Col. Pike: "I have met with this bird but four times in my life, and it has always been extremely rare on Long Island. The first individual I procured near Ponquogue in 1844, and is the specimen in the collection. The second was killed in 1847 on the shore of Canarsie Bay, near where now stands the Oriental Hotel, Coney Island; I had a shooting box there. The others were killed at Southampton."

Himantopus mexicanus. BLACK-NECKED STILT.—Two specimens are in the collection, one labelled "Great South Bay, 1843," and the other "Great South Bay." Col. Pike says of them: "These birds were collected by me and the location is correct. Always a rare bird on Long Island; I have not seen one in my rambles for over thirty years."

Numenius longirostris. LONG-BILLED CURLEW.—Two specimens are in the collection, labelled "Rockaway Meadows." Of this species Col. Pike says: "I have shot hundreds of these birds, and fifty years ago they were very plentiful. On 'Foster's Meadows' I always met with them. In the last twenty-five years they seem to have disappeared, and I have not met a single individual. The location of the two specimens in the collection is all right."

Hæmatopus palliatus. AMERICAN OYSTER-CATCHER.—This specimen was brought to Mr. Akhurst in the flesh by 'Old Jake,' the peddler referred to before. It is labelled "South Side Meadows," and was probably shot on the Great South Beach somewhere between Fire Island Inlet and Coney Island. There is no date attached, although Mr. Akhurst says it was many years since and is the only one he ever had from Long Island. Sex not given.

Tympanuchus cupido. HEATH HEN.—There is no specimen of this species in the collection. Col. Pike remembers having killed individuals of this species a number of times on Long Island—the first time in 1836. "I was making a tour on foot round the Island, collecting, and one morning while encamped at 'Comac Hills' we found our larder empty and visited the plains for game. We killed a number of these birds and made some skins of them. They were not plentiful, yet we procured all we wanted. Soon after a law was enacted for their preservation. I have not

¹ Indian Pond is at Flatlands, near the old race course. It is in the woods some distance from the Coney Island road.

met with an individual for twenty-five years in the woods or plains which I have hunted over, and I am afraid they are nearly extinct." The Heath Hen has undoubtedly been extinct on Long Island for at least half a century, and it is important, therefore, to place on record all of its life history that can now be obtained from living witnesses. Our esteemed fellow-member Mr. George N. Lawrence is one of the few living scientists who have had the privilege of seeing this species on its native heath. It is with much pleasure, therefore, that I append herewith a letter from Mr. Lawrence relative to bygone days and that extinct bird.

"My Dear Mr. Dutcher :

"Did you ever endeavor to trace the specimen of Pinnated Grouse which I informed you I saw at Hempstead about sixty years ago, mounted and under a glass shade? It was said to be the last example of its race on Long Island, formerly so numerous, and known to the natives as the Heath Hen.

"I think it was in the summer of 1831 that I accepted the invitation of a friend to spend a few days with him at the residence of his grandmother at Mastic for the purpose of shooting Bay Snipe in the Great South Bay. At that time the only mode of conveyance was by stage coach. We started from Brooklyn in the morning (another friend going with us), and by noon we reached Hempstead where, at the roadside tavern, while waiting in the parlor for dinner, I was interested in the specimen above alluded to; it was a fine specimen and in good condition; possibly it may be still in the possession of some member of the family.¹ At night we stopped at Patchogue and did not reach our destination until the next morning.

"The Grouse at one time were quite abundant in the scrub oaks of the middle part of the island. I remember hearing of the successful shooting of them by Mr. John Norton. One day he got in the midst of a covey, which was scattered around him in a piece of scrub oak. On shooting one, instead of securing it, he threw down some part of his wardrobe to mark the spot, first his hat, then his cravat, coat and vest; — how far he disrobed I am unable to tell, I suppose that depended upon the number of birds killed. I remember Mr. Norton very well, he was a small man and an enthusiastic sportsman. The family mansion where he resided was on comparatively high ground, just west of Far Rockaway, and bordering on the ocean. The old house was removed by the march of improvement, and the grounds in which it stood are now known by the euphonious name of Wave Crest.

"As is known by ornithologists, the Long Island bird was considered to be identical with the Prairie Hen of the West, but quite recently it has been decided by Mr. William Brewster that they are distinct species. It

¹ A visit to Hempstead to see this specimen revealed the fact that it was destroyed by fire a few years since. — W. D.

is surprising that this was not discovered sooner, as their habitats were so very different, one frequenting a dense scrub oak region and the other an open prairie country.

Yours truly,

January 20th, 1892.

GEO. N. LAWRENCE.]"

Ectopistes migratorius. PASSENGER PIGEON.—There is but one specimen in the collection; it is without data. Col. Pike contributes the following interesting note regarding the former abundance of this species and an old time recollection of shooting them within the present city limits of Brooklyn. "Near Second Place (now blocks of brown stone dwellings) there used to be a large, thickly-wooded hill; at that time (1840) this was out of town, and there were very few houses between the City Hall and it. Sportsmen used to gather at this place to shoot Wild Pigeons. In crossing Long Island the Pigeons used to take this wooded hill in their flight, to rest before they crossed at the Narrows below. I have seen thousands there, and have killed a great many at that place. They have been gradually growing less since, and for the last fifteen years I have not seen a single individual on Long Island. Just fifteen years ago I was collecting at Flatlands and I shot one, the last I ever met; I am sorry I killed it. They are gradually becoming extinct everywhere, and in a few years they will be entirely wiped out."

Accipiter atricapillus. AMERICAN GOSHAWK.—The collection contains two fine specimens, both of which were mounted by Mr. Akhurst. One is in immature plumage, and was presented by Mr. James A. Hewlett of Rockaway, Queens Co. No date is given. The second specimen is an adult bird, and was shot by Mr. W. Day at Bay Ridge, Kings Co. This person was a retail dealer in poultry and kept a stand in Bond Street, Brooklyn; he was very fond of a gun, and shot during the season many small birds, as Robins, Golden-winged Woodpeckers, etc., which he sold. When he shot such birds as Owls, Hawks, etc., he took them to Mr. Akhurst, who bought them to mount. There is no date given with this specimen, although Mr. Akhurst thinks it was probably shot early in the sixties. He recalls one winter about thirty years since when there was a remarkable flight of Goshawks on the Island. They were nearly all adult birds, and were so plentiful that he refused to buy them even at twenty-five cents each. He shot a number, and purchased many more, all of which he preserved and afterwards sold. He has never seen such a flight since although he has occasionally received specimens.

Aquila chrysaëtos. GOLDEN EAGLE.—This specimen was brought to Mr. Akhurst alive by a negro who caught the bird at Canarsie. To prevent its escape it was wrapped in a piece of old fish-net. The price paid for the bird was \$5.00, which sum was furnished by the late Mr. Van Brunt Wyckoff of Bay Ridge. No date or sex is given.

"**Hierofalco Islandicus** (*Sabine*). JER. FALCON."—Recorded by Mr. George N. Lawrence¹ in his list, in the following words: "This species is

¹ Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist., Vol. VIII, 1866, p. 280.

of rare occurrence in our vicinity. A beautiful specimen, not quite adult, was most liberally presented to me by our fellow member Mr. John Akhurst, taxidermist, of Brooklyn; it was killed on Long Island in the winter of 1856." Subsequently Mr. Lawrence informed me that the specimen in the Long Island Historical collection had been presented by him and was the one referred to above.

Strix pratincola. AMERICAN BARN OWL.—This specimen came from Bay Ridge, Kings Co., and was purchased by Mr. Akhurst from some of the local gunners in that neighborhood. This and the following specimen were procured many years since when all that tract of country about Bay Ridge was farm or forest land, and was not occupied by dwellings as it is now.

Surnia ulula caparoch. AMERICAN HAWK OWL.—This is a fine specimen of this very rare Owl, and was also secured from some of the local gunners at Bay Ridge. It was brought in the flesh to Mr. Akhurst who purchased and mounted it. He thinks it all of thirty years since the bird was secured. It is the only one that ever came to his notice or possession from Long Island.

Ceophlœus pileatus. PILEATED WOODPECKER.—There are two specimens of this large Woodpecker in the collection, both of which were mounted from birds brought to Mr. Akhurst in the flesh. One was presented by Mr. H. G. Reeve, and the other belonged at one time to the late Mr. Philip M. Brasher. Further than that they are Long Island birds, Mr. Akhurst can give no information. He states that before the outskirts of Brooklyn were built upon, there was a large tract of forest running eastward from the Flatbush road. While there were many places in it that were denuded of trees and overgrown with under-scrub and second-growth, yet as a whole the timber was large and of the original growth. It was a very fine collecting ground, being situated at the extreme western end of the Island, and a large majority of the birds migrating over Long Island naturally sought this tract for resting and feeding. For years, in the spring and fall, Mr. Akhurst visited this place almost daily, either alone or in company with Col. Pike, and many of the rarest specimens now in the Long Island Historical collection were obtained on these excursions. During one of them Mr. Akhurst saw two Pileated Woodpeckers, but they were so extremely wild that he did not secure either of them. Being perfectly familiar with the species, he is satisfied that he was not mistaken in the identification. These four specimens are all that have ever come to his notice.¹

Melanerpes carolinus. RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER.—This specimen was presented by the late Dr. H. F. Aten, of Brooklyn; there are no data connected with it. Mr. Akhurst states that during the period he was actively collecting in the tract of timber referred to above, he saw several specimens of *M. carolinus*, but for a great many years he has not found

¹ See Bull. Nuttall Ornith. Club, Vol. VI, p. 126.

any. The absence of the species probably arises from the fact that the character of the country has been entirely changed by the cutting down of the forests and the occupation of the land by dwellings and streets.

Contopus borealis. OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER.—There is but one specimen of this species in the collection; it was presented by Mr. John D. Hicks, who procured it a number of years since near his home in Old Westbury, Queens Co. He informs me that it is the only one he recollects ever having seen.

Corvus corax sinuatus. AMERICAN RAVEN.—One specimen in the collection. Col. Pike says: "I never met with this bird. While shooting in 1836 at 'Comac Hill' my companion, Mr. George Bartlett, killed a fine specimen and I skinned it; it is the one in the collection. Philip Brasher had one in his collection that was killed in the woods near Prospect Park.¹ This was in 1848. These are the only specimens I have ever known to be killed on Long Island."

Loxia leucoptera. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—"The White-winged Crossbills in the collection were killed by me in Lotts Woods, Flatlands, in 1848. This year there seemed to be quite a flight of these birds, as many were killed. I have seen them but once since, in 1864, when I killed two near 'Cypress Hill Cemetery.'"—(*Nicolas Pike*, MS. notes.)

Guiraca cærulea. BLUE GROSBEEK.—This wanderer from the south was taken in May, 1843, at Canarsie. It is a very fine, adult, male specimen. Mr. Akhurst recollects having shot during his active collecting some three or four specimens of this exotic bird, and having seen a few others that he did not secure. However, it is a great many years since he has seen one.

Spiza americana. DICKCISEL.—The specimen in the collection was taken by Col. Pike at College Point, Long Island, in 1841. Mr. Akhurst states that about that period they were very common birds, breeding freely all over Kings County, in suitable localities, especially in clover fields. He has not seen any for many years.

Protonotaria citrea. PROTHONOTARY WARBLER.—In April, 1888, I recorded a specimen of this Warbler which was sent to me for identification by the keeper of Montauk Light, and which I supposed was the first one that had been taken in New York State. I find, however, that as early as May, 1849, one was shot at Jamaica, Queens Co. It was a male in full breeding plumage, and was mounted by Mr. Akhurst. It is the only one he ever saw from Long Island.

Helmitherus vermivorus. WORM-EATING WARBLER.—Two specimens are in the collection, one presented by Mr. C. H. Baxter who secured it at Newtown, Long Island, and the other by Col. Pike who shot it in the Valley Grove Woods, now part of Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Mr. Akhurst states that during his active collecting he secured several of

¹ This specimen is now in the collection of the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt., this institution having purchased the Brasher collection.

these Warblers from Kings and Queens Counties. Col. Pike states that he has not seen this bird for many years and always considered it rare on Long Island.

Helminthophila ruficapilla. NASHVILLE WARBLER.—The specimen in the collection was shot by Col. Pike in what is now Prospect Park, Brooklyn, and was mounted by Mr. Akhurst who also procured one or two specimens. Col. Pike considers them rare on Long Island.

Helminthophila celata. ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER.—This specimen was shot on the East-side lands by Mr. Akhurst, and is the only one he ever procured. It is in immature plumage, and was shown to, and identified by, Mr. George N. Lawrence.

Dendroica cærulea. CERULEAN WARBLER.—There is a fine male specimen of this species in full breeding plumage, which Mr. Akhurst shot in the vicinity of Crow Hill, where the Kings County Penitentiary now stands. There is no date attached to the specimen, nor can Mr. Akhurst recollect when it was secured; it is the only one he ever obtained on Long Island.

Dendroica dominica. YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER.—This very rare specimen is a male, and was shot by Mr. Akhurst in the same locality in which he secured the Cerulean Warbler. It is the only one he ever saw on Long Island.

Geothlypis formosa. KENTUCKY WARBLER.—This specimen was shot by Col. Pike in Lotts Woods, Flatlands, in May. He considers them rare on Long Island, and has not seen a specimen for some years.

Sylvania mitrata. HOODED WARBLER.—There are two specimens of this species, both presented by Mr. Chas. H. Baxter after they had been mounted by Mr. Akhurst. Neither of them has any locality or date attached. Mr. Akhurst states positively that they were from birds brought to him in the flesh.

Parus bicolor. TUFTED TITMOUSE.—This specimen was also procured by Mr. Akhurst in the second growth on the East-side lands within the city limits of Brooklyn; he states that during his active collecting he saw a number of these birds. It is such a noisy species that any individuals in a locality are sure to attract the collector by their outcry.

Polioptila cærulea. BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER.—There is but one specimen in the collection, labelled "Shot by J. Akhurst, at Canarsie, in 1849." It is the only specimen that Mr. Akhurst recollects ever having seen from Long Island.

Saxicola œnanthe. WHEATEAR.—The Historical Society possesses but one specimen of this boreal bird. It is one of the latest additions to the collection, having been shot at Jamaica, Queens Co., in 1885 by Mr. John Pringle, a nurseryman of Brooklyn, and taken to Mr. Akhurst who mounted it. Mr Pringle stated that he saw two of these birds in company, but secured only the one presented to the Historical Society.